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SPAWN



Capullo
95

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93

DIGITAL
EDITION

TODD McFARLANE AND IMAGE COMICS PRESENT...

THE DEVIL'S BANQUET

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SPAWN 92 Summary

Mark continues his attempts to persuade Spawn to exchange lives with him, claiming he is dying and knows he'll go to Hell and therefore, if he were a Spawn he could be a ruler there instead of a bottom-feeder. Spawn takes Mark on a tour of Hell, puts him through a ritualistic test that rids him of his terminal illness and begs him not to pursue Hell. When Mark still insists that he wants to be a ruler in Hell, he "accidentally" falls to his death with no arrangement as a HellSpawn.

DEDICATED TO
The Memory of Gil Kane



TODD McFARLANE
PRODUCTIONS



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NEW
YORK.

GETTING
A LITTLE
COCKY, AREN'T
WE?

LEAVE
ME
ALONE.

I'M SORRY. AM I
INTERRUPTING?

LET ME
GUESS:
YOU'RE
"COMMUNING
WITH THE
SHADOWS,"
BECOMING
"ONE WITH THE
DARKNESS..."

DECIDING
WHERE AND HOW
TO METE OUT YOUR
OWN PERSONAL
BRAND OF JUSTICE,
RIGHT? KNOW
WHAT I THINK?

I DON'T
CARE WHAT YOU
THINK. YOU'RE
IRRELEVANT.
OBSOLETE.

YOU
ASKED ME
TO "LET GO OF YOU"
AND I DID. I'D THINK
YOU COULD EXTEND
THE SAME COURTESY
TO ME.

YEAH, WELL, MAYBE THIS AIN'T THE TIME TO BE COURTEOUS. THERE'S SOME BAD MOJO ABOUT TO RAIN DOWN REAL HARD. THINGS ARE OUT OF BALANCE.

SOMEONE'S GONNA GET SERIOUSLY HURT. A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE HOPING IT'LL BE YOU.

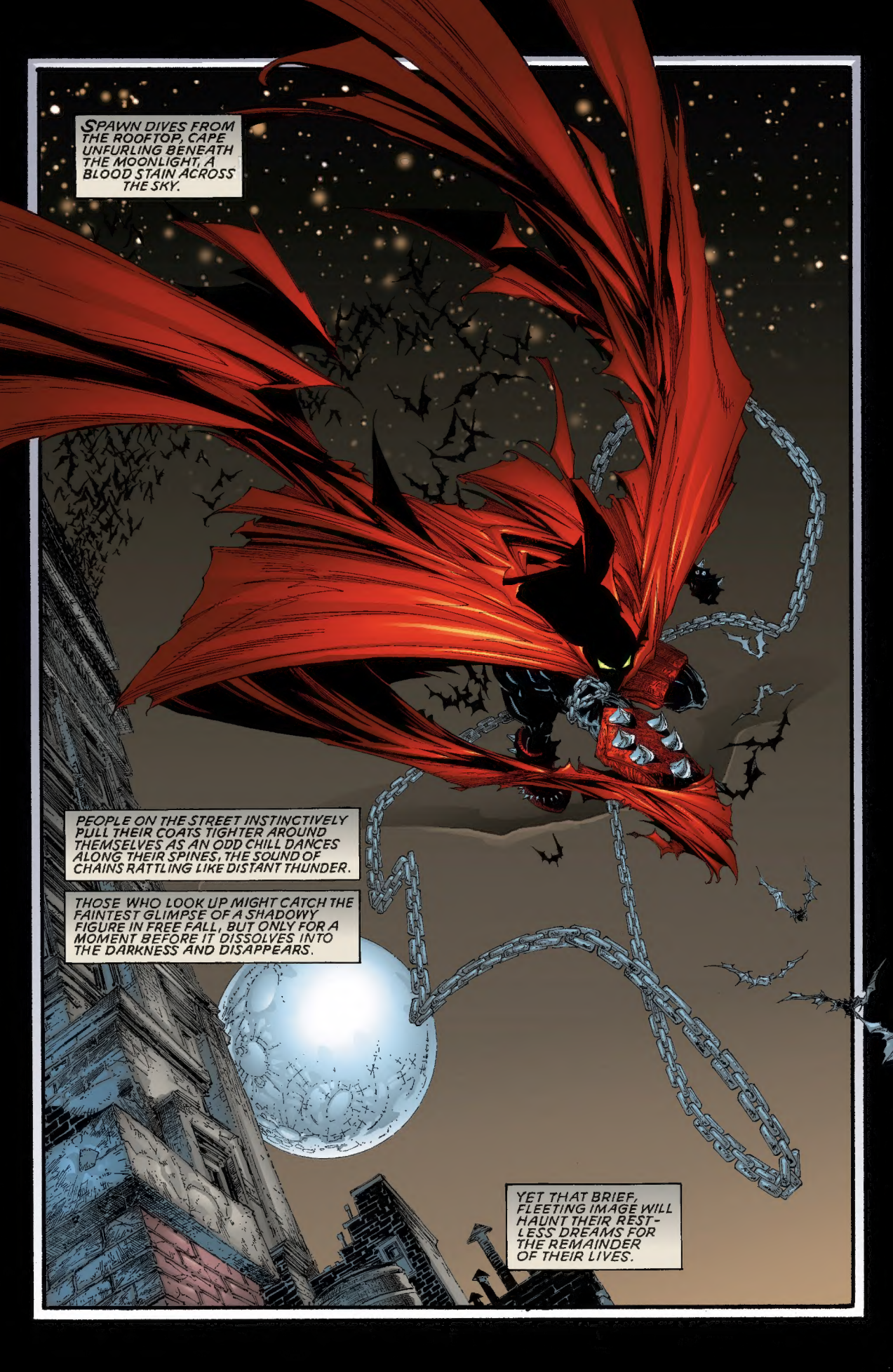
YOU THINK I'M SCARED OF THEM? HEAVEN, HELL? ANY OF THEM? YOU'RE MAD.

MAYBE. BUT THEN AGAIN, I'M NOT THE ONE STANDING ON A ROOFTOP CHATTING WITH "OBSOLETE" GHOSTS, AM I?

JUST SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

WATCH YOUR BACK, OKAY, BUD? AND DON'T BE A STRANGER.



A dramatic comic book illustration of Spawn falling from a rooftop. He is shown in a dynamic, inverted position, with his large, flowing red cape billowing out around him. He wears his signature black mask with glowing yellow eyes and a red, spiked collar. Heavy chains are wrapped around his torso and limbs, trailing behind him as he falls. The background is a dark, starry night sky filled with a swarm of small, dark, bat-like creatures. A large, bright full moon is visible in the lower left, partially obscured by the falling figure. The bottom left corner shows the corner of a stone building.

SPAWN DIVES FROM THE ROOFTOP, CAPE UNFURLING BENEATH THE MOONLIGHT, A BLOOD STAIN ACROSS THE SKY.

PEOPLE ON THE STREET INSTINCTIVELY PULL THEIR COATS TIGHTER AROUND THEMSELVES AS AN ODD CHILL DANCES ALONG THEIR SPINES, THE SOUND OF CHAINS RATTLING LIKE DISTANT THUNDER.

THOSE WHO LOOK UP MIGHT CATCH THE FAINTEST GLIMPSE OF A SHADOWY FIGURE IN FREE FALL, BUT ONLY FOR A MOMENT BEFORE IT DISSOLVES INTO THE DARKNESS AND DISAPPEARS.

YET THAT BRIEF, FLEETING IMAGE WILL HAUNT THEIR RESTLESS DREAMS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THEIR LIVES.

AN OCEAN AWAY.
A COUNTRY HOUSE
IN SUSSEX, ENGLAND.

AN
ABSOLUTE
SCANDAL.
THIS WOULD
NEVER HAVE
HAPPENED
IN MAGGIE'S
DAY.

IT'S A
SHAME, BUT
WE HAVE TO
FACE FACTS:
THE DAYS OF
EMPIRE ARE
OVER. PROUD
TRADITION, "RULE
BRITANNIA,"
THE TIE AND
CREST...

"RUM,
SODOMY
AND THE
LASH..."

NOW
THERE'S
A PROUD
TRADITION.

Oh WELL,
"SIC TRANSIT
GLORIA MUNDI,"
AS THE SAYERS
SAY. "SO GOES
THE GLORY OF
THIS WORLD."

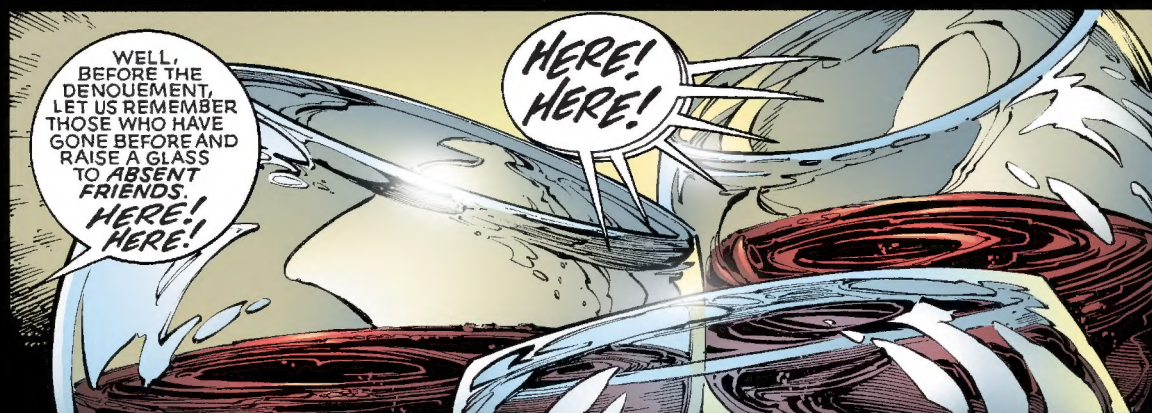
Ahem.
NOW THEN.
I HOPE YOU
ALL ENJOYED
YOUR MEAL...

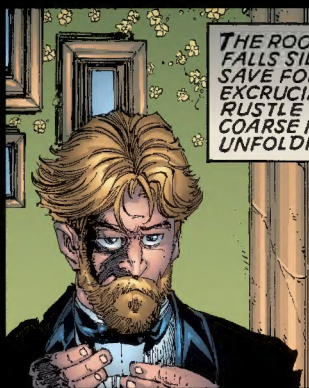
LOVELY,
THANKS.

YES,
THANK
YOU.

CHEERS.

CHEERS,
YEAH.

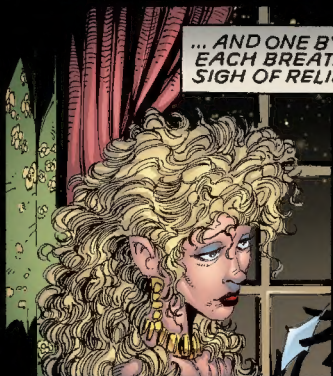




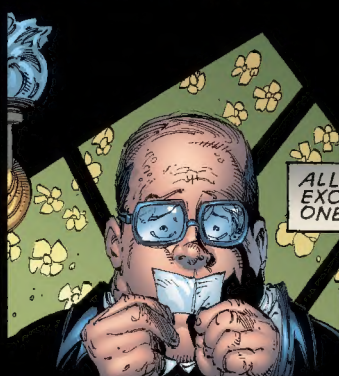
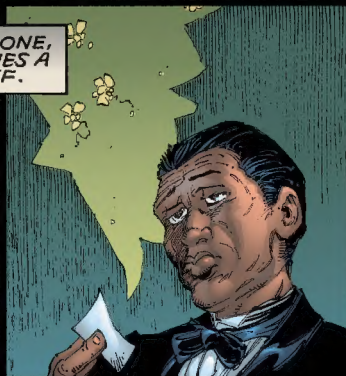
THE ROOM FALLS SILENT SAVE FOR THE EXCRUCIATING RUSTLE OF COARSE PAPER UNFOLDING.



ONE BY ONE, THE GUESTS OPEN THEIR CHITS...



... AND ONE BY ONE, EACH BREATHES A SIGH OF RELIEF.

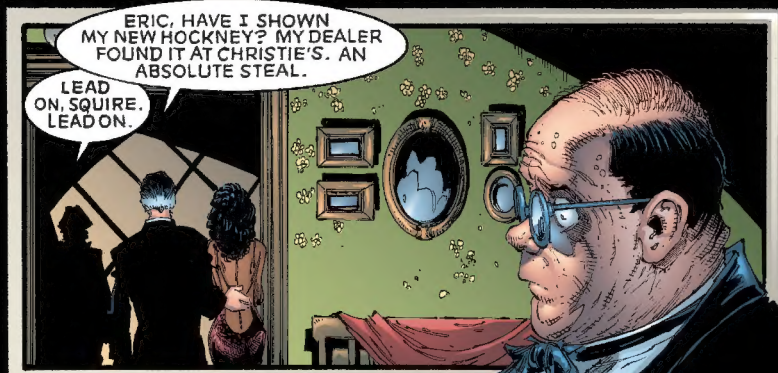


ALL EXCEPT ONE.



WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE OUR REGINALD WILL BE THE "BUNNY" TONIGHT. CHIN UP, REG. THERE'S A GOOD LAD.

WE'LL GIVE YOU A FEW MINUTES TO GATHER YOURSELF.



ERIC, HAVE I SHOWN MY NEW HOCKNEY? MY DEALER FOUND IT AT CHRISTIE'S. AN ABSOLUTE STEAL.

LEAD ON, SQUIRE. LEAD ON.

REGINALD BLAKNEY SITS STUNNED, A THOUSAND THOUGHTS COMPETING FOR SPACE IN HIS SPINNING HEAD. HE KNEW THIS COULD HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER. NOUSE CRYING ABOUT IT NOW.



STILL, SOMEHOW HE CAN'T HELP THINK HOW BLOODY UNFAIR IT IS THAT THE ROAST BEEF WAS SO UNDERCOOKED.

AFTER ALL, IT WAS HIS LAST MEAL.

THREE MINUTES LATER, OUT IN THE
GROUNDS SURROUNDING THE HOME:

REGINALD'S ADRENAL
GLANDS KICK IN, HIS CLUMSY
BODY GIVEN OVER TO PRIMAL
"FIGHT OR FLIGHT" INSTINCTS.

BUT HIS MIND IS MUDDLED,
DISCONNECTED. FUNNY,
THE THOUGHTS THAT FLOAT
THROUGH THE HEAD OF A
MAN RUNNING FOR HIS LIFE.

WORDS
FROM LONG
FORGOTTEN
SCHOOL
LESSONS:
SALIVATION.
MASTICATION.
DIGESTION.
ELIMINATION.

PEPSIN. RENNIN. LIPASE...
DIFFUSION. PERISTALSIS.
HYDROLYSIS... COLD, CLINI-
CAL TERMS THAT DESCRIBE
NATURE AT HER MOST
SIMPLE AND MOST
SAVAGE LEVEL.

IN HIS MIND'S EYE,
REGINALD CAN STILL
REMEMBER THE
SCIENCE LABS OF
HIS STUDENT DAYS.

RAIN BEATING GENTLY
AGAINST A WINDOW,
A BATTALION OF
FROGS IN TIN DISHES,
THEIR BELLIES SPLAYED
OPEN, THE AIR THICK
WITH THE SCENT OF
FORMALDEHYDE
AND DAMP WOOL.


HE REMEMBERS THE
TEACHER. A FIDGETY OLD
WELSHMAN WITH YELLOWING
HAIR AND GREY TEETH.
LEWIS. OR LLEWELYN.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

AND HE REMEMBERS
THESE WORDS: "GENTLE-
MEN, THE ANNALS OF
SURVIVAL AND CONQUEST
ON THIS PLANET CAN BE
NEATLY REDUCED TO TWO,
ELEGANTLY DARWINIAN,
CATEGORIES:

"WHO EATS, AND WHO IS EATEN."

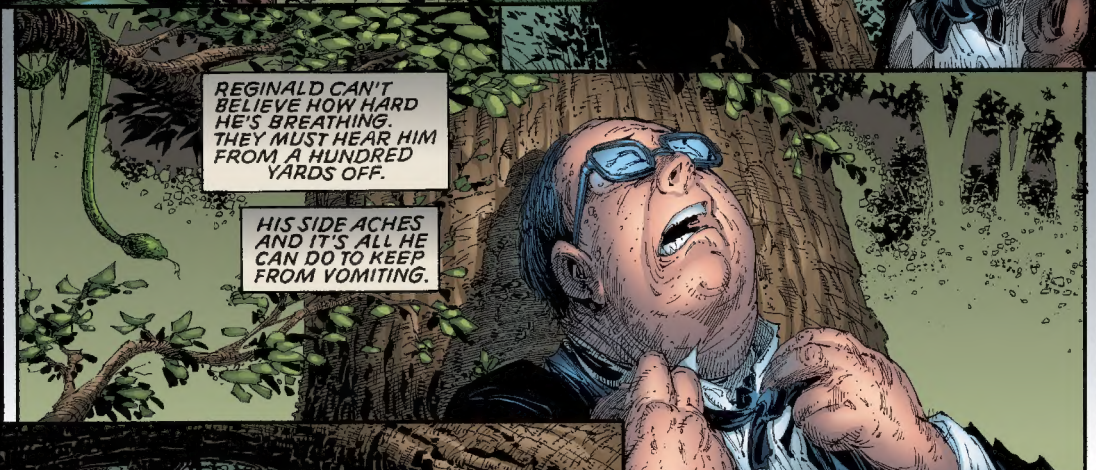


HERE
BUNNY
BUNNY.
BUNNY.



HE CAN HEAR THEM
STALKING HIM, SNIFFING
THROUGH THE BRUSH
LIKE HOUNDS AFTER A
RABBIT. THE FULL MOON
ABOVE MIGHT AS WELL
BE A SEARCH LIGHT.

COME OUT,
COME OUT
WHEREVER
YOU ARE.




REGINALD CAN'T
BELIEVE HOW HARD
HE'S BREATHING.
THEY MUST HEAR HIM
FROM A HUNDRED
YARDS OFF.

HIS SIDE ACHES
AND IT'S ALL HE
CAN DO TO KEEP
FROM VOMITING.



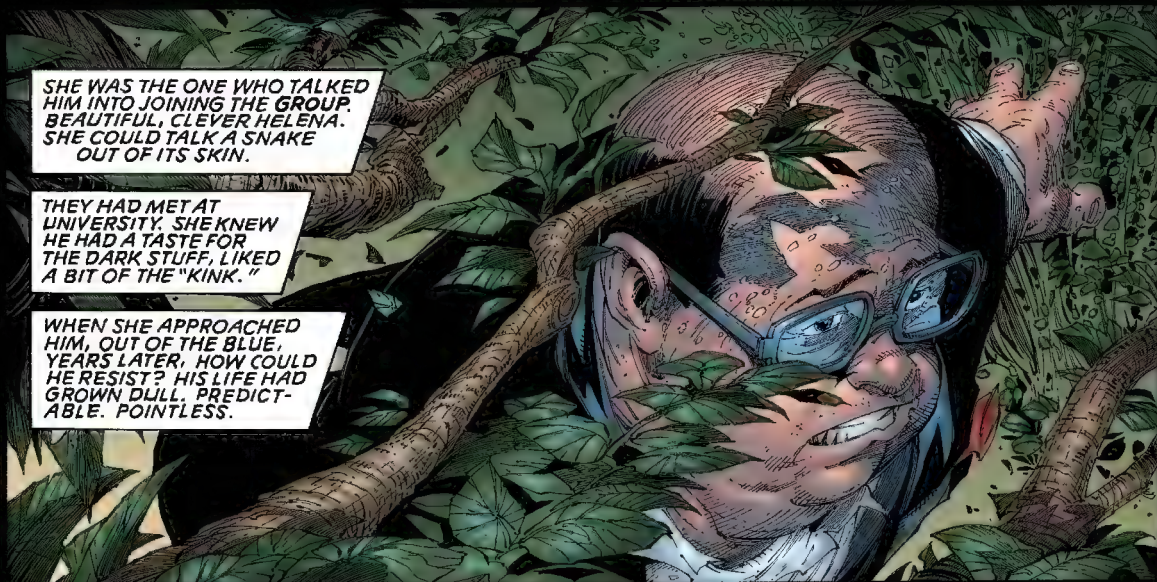
COME
ON, REG
OLD BOY,
WHERE'VE
YOU
GOTTEN
OFF TO?

THIS ISN'T
HOW IT'S
SUPPOSED TO
END. HE NEVER
DREAMED
IT WOULD
ACTUALLY
COME TO THIS.



WHAT A FOOL.
WHY DID HE
EVER AGREE
TO SUCH
MADNESS?

IT'S ALL
HELENA'S
FAULT,
ISN'T IT.



SHE WAS THE ONE WHO TALKED HIM INTO JOINING THE GROUP. BEAUTIFUL, CLEVER HELENA. SHE COULD TALK A SNAKE OUT OF ITS SKIN.

THEY HAD MET AT UNIVERSITY. SHE KNEW HE HAD A TASTE FOR THE DARK STUFF, LIKED A BIT OF THE "KINK."

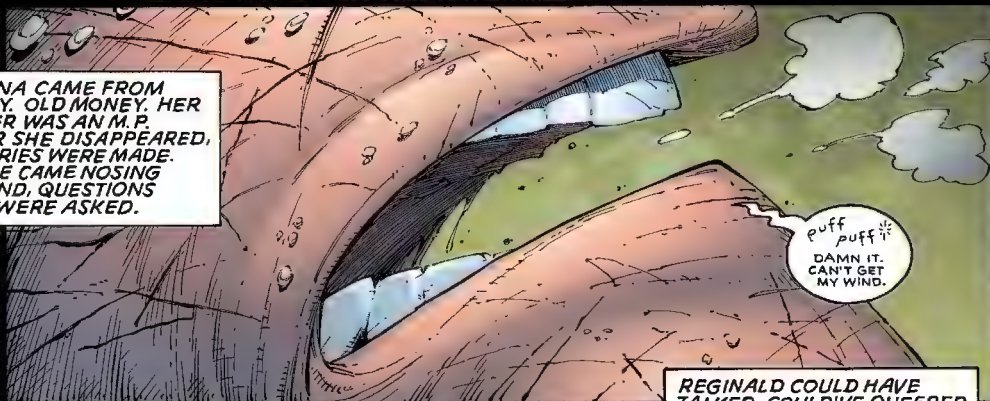
WHEN SHE APPROACHED HIM, OUT OF THE BLUE, YEARS LATER, HOW COULD HE RESIST? HIS LIFE HAD GROWN DULL, PREDICTABLE. POINTLESS.

THEY OFFERED EXCITEMENT, A NEW LIFE, POWER, INTRIGUE. MAYBE EVEN A LITTLE SEX.

puff
puff

LAST MONTH IT WAS HELEN, A WHO DREW THE BLACK "X." SHE GAVE THEM A GOOD RUN AND NEVER CRIED FOR MERCY. TOUGH AS NAILS SHE WAS, TO THE VERY END.

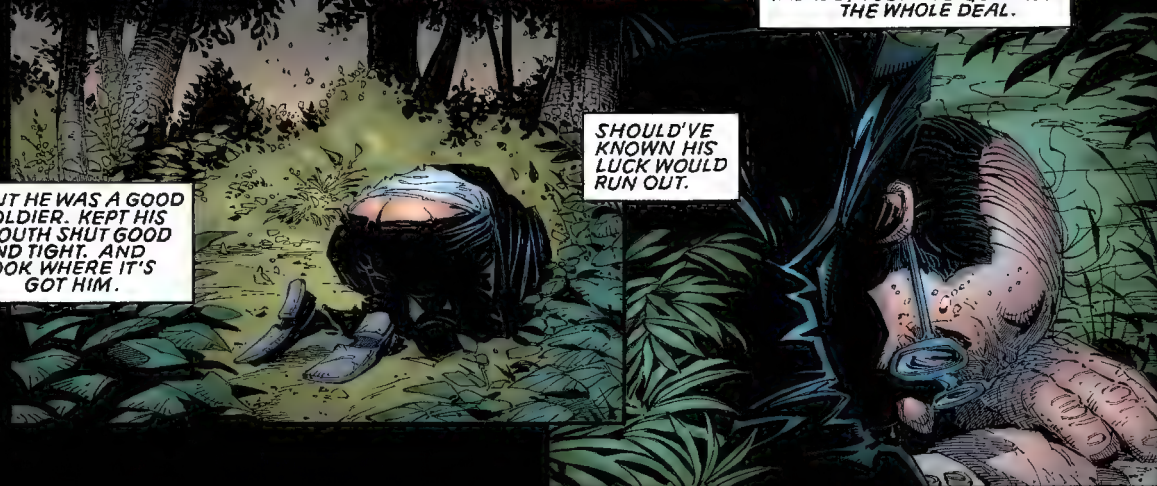
BUT THINGS GOT STICKY.



HELENA CAME FROM MONEY. OLD MONEY. HER FATHER WAS AN M.P. AFTER SHE DISAPPEARED, INQUIRIES WERE MADE. POLICE CAME NOSING AROUND, QUESTIONS WERE ASKED.

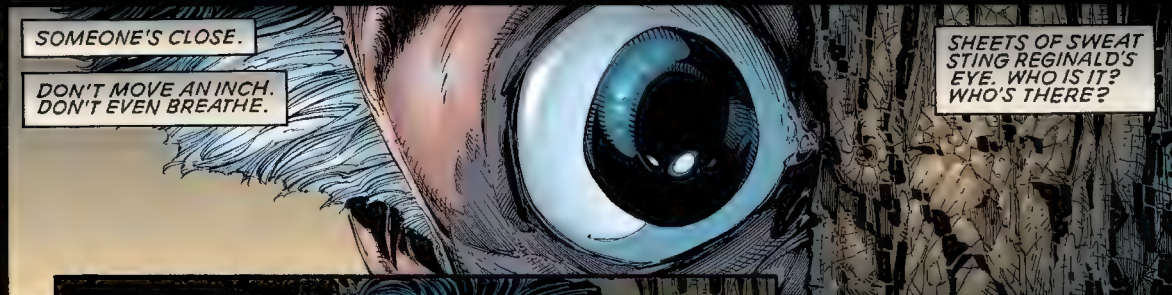
puff puff
DAMN IT. CAN'T GET MY WIND.

REGINALD COULD HAVE TALKED, COULD'VE QUEERED THE WHOLE DEAL.



BUT HE WAS A GOOD SOLDIER. KEPT HIS MOUTH SHUT GOOD AND TIGHT. AND LOOK WHERE IT'S GOT HIM.


SHOULD'VE KNOWN HIS LUCK WOULD RUN OUT.



SOMEONE'S CLOSE.

DON'T MOVE AN INCH.
DON'T EVEN BREATHE.


SHEETS OF SWEAT
STING REGINALD'S
EYE. WHO IS IT?
WHO'S THERE?



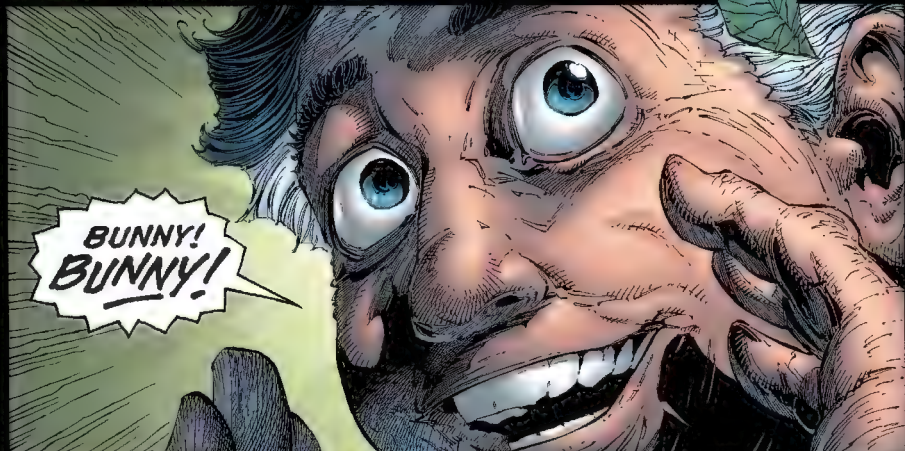
BLOODY
HARGREAVES.
ARROGANT
BASTARD.
PROBABLY
RIGGED
THE DRAW.
REGINALD
WOULDN'T
PUT IT
PAST HIM.

FEE FIE
FOE FUM,
LOOK OUT
REGGIE
HERE I
COME...

NO MORE
THAN A COUPLE
OF YARDS
AWAY. CLOSE
ENOUGH TO
SMELL HIS VILE
COLOGNE.
DON'T MAKE A
SOUND. FOR
GOD'S SAKE,
DON'T WHIMPER.



"SOD THIS!"
REG TELLS
HIMSELF.
"I'M OFF!"



**BUNNY!
BUNNY!**



**OVER
HERE! I'VE
FOUND
HIM!**

SCREW THIS FOR A GAME OF SOLDIERS, THEN. REGINALD BLAKNEY WANTS TO LIVE.

THEY CAN HAVE THEIR DARK SCHEMES AND GHOULISH PARLOR GAMES, BUT THEY CAN COUNT HIM OUT, MAKE NO MISTAKE.

HE CAN'T BELIEVE HIS EYES. UP AHEAD, IT'S LIKE A MIRAGE.

HIS LUCK MUST BE CHANGING.

HIS SHOES SLIP AND HIS PLUMP FINGERS CAN'T GET A DECENT GRIP.

IF HE CAN GET OVER THE GATE, HE COULD MAKE IT BACK DOWN TO THE MAIN ROAD, FLAG DOWN A CAR, OR ELSE HIDE IN THE DEEP WOODS TILL THE SUN COMES UP.

BUT HIS FRAME ISN'T MADE FOR CLIMBING.

Tsk-Tsk. REG, OLD SON, YOU WEREN'T GOING OVER THE WALL, WERE YOU? BAD FORM, REG. BAD FORM.

P-PISS OFF! I QUIT! I WANT OUT. I'M OUT OF THE GAME, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

I'M AFRAID WE CAN'T ACCEPT YOUR RESIGNATION.

NOW, COME ON, BLAKNEY. TAKE IT LIKE A MAN!

AAAAH!

HAH! YOU SOUND LIKE A FLOUNCY SCHOOL GIRL!



**YOU
BLOODY
BASTARD!
CHRIST!**

STOP! I
RENOUNCE MY
OATH. I'M REMOVING
MYSELF FROM PLAY.
Y-YOU TOLD ME YOUR-
SELF... THE RITE WON'T
COUNT IF WE
DON'T PLAY
WILLINGLY.

OH, THAT.
YES, WELL, I'M
AFRAID THAT I
LIED. MORE
BAD LUCK FOR
YOU, EH?



No!



YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO CARVE
ME UP! DO YOU
HEAR ME! YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO
CARVE ME
UP!

OOMP!



GET BACK
HERE YOU GREAT
FLESHY TURD!
I'M NOT **DONE**
WITH YOU.



MARCUS!
WHAT THE DEVIL
HAPPENED?

CHRIST,
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT.

FINE.
I'M
FINE.



IT SEEMS OUR
REGGIE HAS A LITTLE MORE
SPIRIT THAN WE GAVE HIM CREDIT
FOR. I THOUGHT HE'D MAKE
RATHER DULL SPORT, BUT HE'S
GIVING US A RUN FOR IT,
IT SEEMS.

SURE YOU'RE
NOT HURT,
MARCUS?

NO.
NOT AT ALL.
I'LL TAKE A
NIP OF THAT,
THOUGH.



Hmm.
CHEERS.

DON'T
WORRY. OUR
FAT LITTLE
FRIEND WON'T
GET VERY
FAR.




LOOK.
HE'S LOST A
SHOE...




... AND
A GOOD
DEAL OF
BLOOD.




WE'LL
LET HIM
WEAR HIMSELF
OUT AND THEN
MOVE IN FOR
THE FINALE.



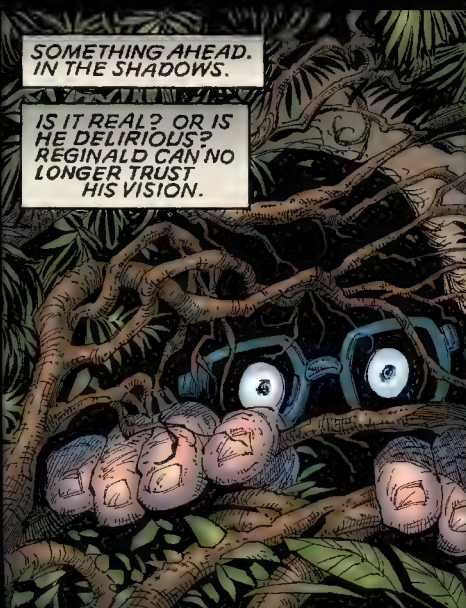
REGINALD
SHIMMIES UP
AN EMBANK-
MENT, HEADING
FOR THE DEEP
UNDERBRUSH.



HE CAN'T RUN
ANYMORE. HIS
ONLY HOPE IS TO
HIDE BEST HE
CAN, AND PRAY
HE MAKES IT
TILL DAYBREAK.



HIS HEART
PUMPS FURIOUSLY,
SPEEDING UP THE
BLOOD LOSS.
HEAD DIZZY,
MIND FADING.




SOMETHING AHEAD.
IN THE SHADOWS.

IS IT REAL? OR IS
HE DELIRIOUS?
REGINALD CAN NO
LONGER TRUST
HIS VISION.



HIS EYES
ADJUST
TO THE
GLOOM.

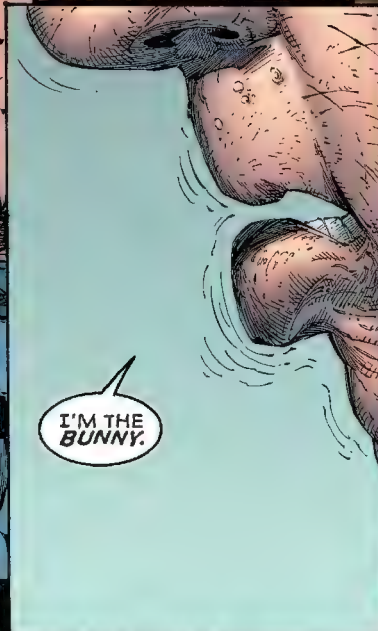
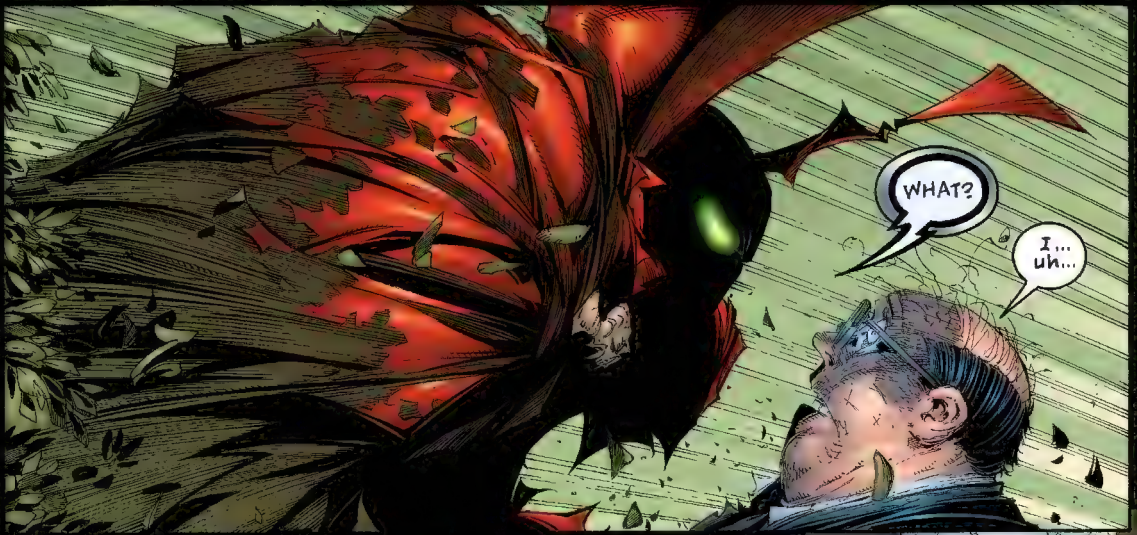
OH
GOD!



THE SHADOWS
COLLECT
THEMSELVES,
AND RISE.

IT'S YOU!
URIZEN!

BUT...
BUT IT'S
NOT *TIME*.
NOT YET.
HAVE YOU
COME FOR--
FOR ME?





"IT'S ALL GOT OUT OF HAND, WE... WE'RE A COVEN, THE *GROUP* I MEAN. THERE WERE THIRTEEN OF US AT THE START. DABBING IN THE DARK ARTS, THE ODD BACCHANALIA, ET CETERA.

"OLD SLAYTON WAS THE HEAD BOY, SO TO SPEAK. FANCED HIMSELF AN ACE WARLOCK.

"'BOUT SIX MONTHS AGO, HE WAS READING TEA LEAVES OR SPILLING GOAT ENTRAILS OR SOME SUCH BOLLOCKS, AND HE DISCOVERED SOMETHING. SOMETHING BIG, HE SAID.



"THERE WAS A STRAND *MISSING* IN THE GREAT WEB. THE BALANCE BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL WAS ALL MUCKED UP.



"NATURE ABHORS A VACUUM, RIGHT? SOMETHING WOULD COME TO FILL THE VOID. SLAYTON THOUGHT HE KNEW WHAT IT WOULD BE.

"HE CALLED IT *URIZEN*, AFTER THE BLAKE POEMS. A GREAT, TERRIBLE BEAST, A KIND UNSEEN IN THIS AGE. HE SAID WE COULD HELP IT ALONG, BE ITS ESCORT. BUT NOT ALL OF US.

"IT WAS SLAYTON'S IDEA FOR THE LOTTERY. WASN'T TOO THRILLED WHEN HE DREW THE FIRST 'X', THOUGH.



"HE WAS THE
FIRST TO GO
AND IT JUST
GOT EASIER
EACH TIME.

"WE DREW LOTS EVERY FULL MOON.
THE PLAN WAS WHOEVER DREW THE
MARKED LOT WOULD BE THE 'BUNNY.'
HUNTED DOWN BY THE OTHERS,
LIKE DIANA AND ACTAEON,
OR THE WILD HUNT.

"AND THEN, WELL... WE WOULD EAT THEM.
ABSORB THEIR SOUL, THEIR SPIRITUAL
POWERS. BASTARDIZATION OF THE LAST
SUPPER, WASN'T IT? 'EAT OF MY BODY,
DRINK OF MY BLOOD.' RIGHT?

"THE PLAN WAS TO GO ON TILL
ONLY ONE WAS LEFT. THE LAST MAN
STANDING WOULD HAVE FEASTED
ON THE SOULS OF THE OTHER
TWELVE. HE'D HAVE THE POWER
OF THE WHOLE GROUP TOGETHER.

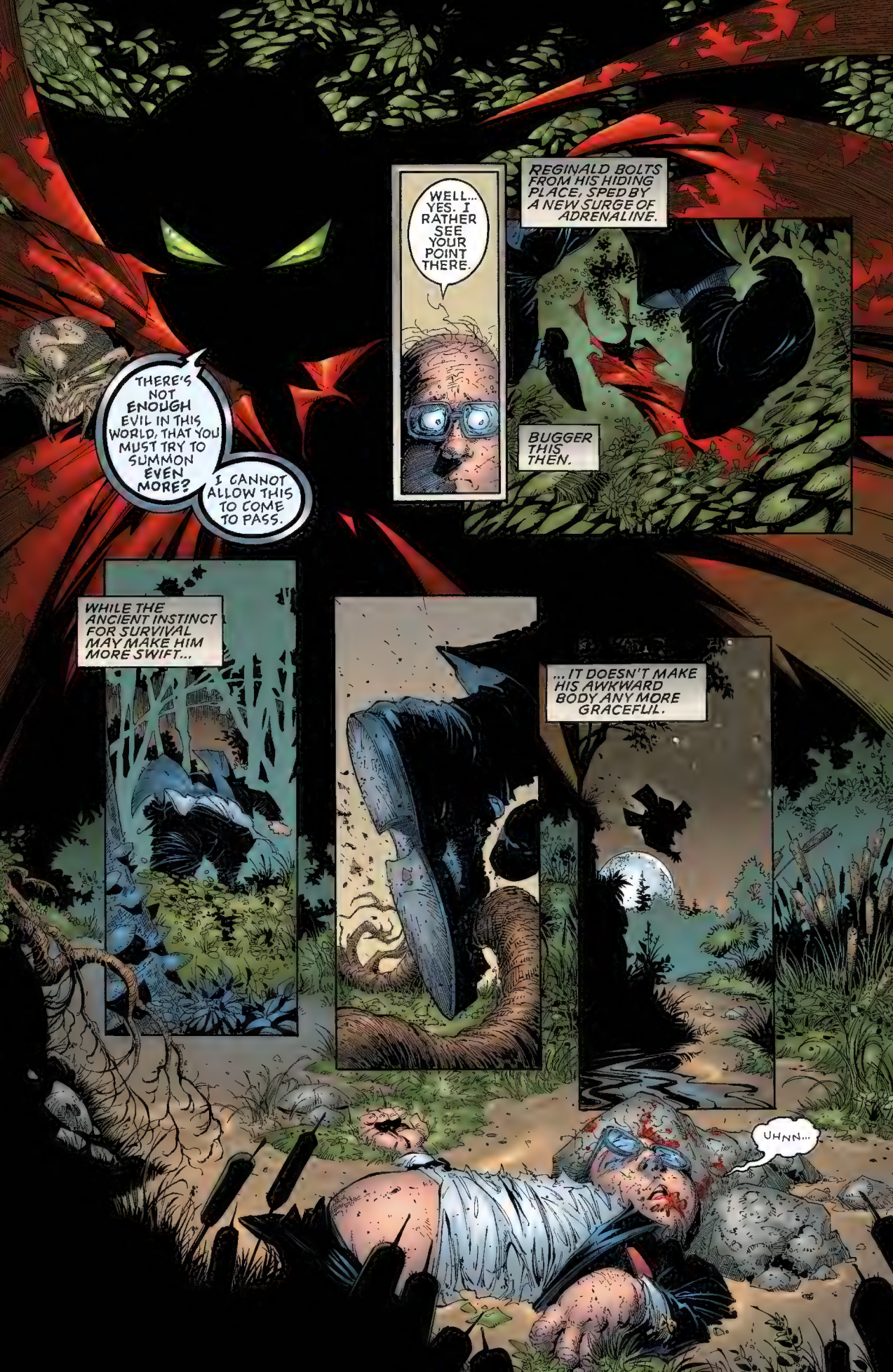
"AND HE WOULD BE THE
VESSEL TO USHER IN THE
REIGN OF URIZEN.

"IT WAS A TONTINE,
A SACRED PACT,
AND WE ALL
AGREED TO IT.

"I KNOW IT SOUNDS
SILLY BUT I DIDN'T
THINK I WOULD LOSE.

"Um...
WHAT...
WHAT ARE
YOU GOING
TO DO WITH
ME?"





THERE'S NOT ENOUGH EVIL IN THIS WORLD, THAT YOU MUST TRY TO SUMMON EVEN MORE?

I CANNOT ALLOW THIS TO COME TO PASS.

WELL... YES. I RATHER SEE YOUR POINT THERE.


REGINALD BOLTS FROM HIS HIDING PLACE, SPED BY A NEW SURGE OF ADRENALINE.

BUGGER THIS THEN.

WHILE THE ANCIENT INSTINCT FOR SURVIVAL MAY MAKE HIM MORE SWIFT...

...IT DOESN'T MAKE HIS AWKWARD BODY ANY MORE GRACEFUL.


UHHN...



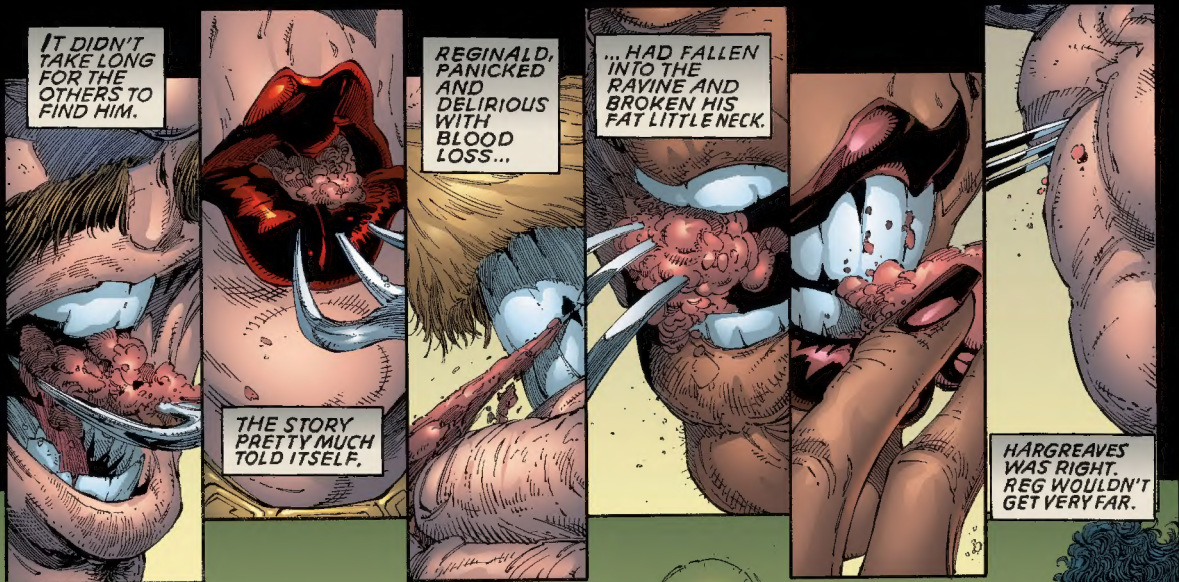
SHADOWS SWIM BEFORE
HIS EYES, THE WORLD
SHIFTING IN AND OUT OF
FOCUS. REGINALD BLAKNEY
LOOKS UP AT THE CLOAKED
FIGURE STANDING
BEFORE HIM.



AS THE
LAST BITS
OF LIFE
GURGLE
FROM HIS
BROKEN
FRAME, HE
SEES THE
CREATURE
REACH
OUT FOR
HIM...



... AND A LAST,
DESPERATE CRY FOR
MERCY DIES STILL-
BORN IN HIS BLOOD-
CLOTTED THROAT.



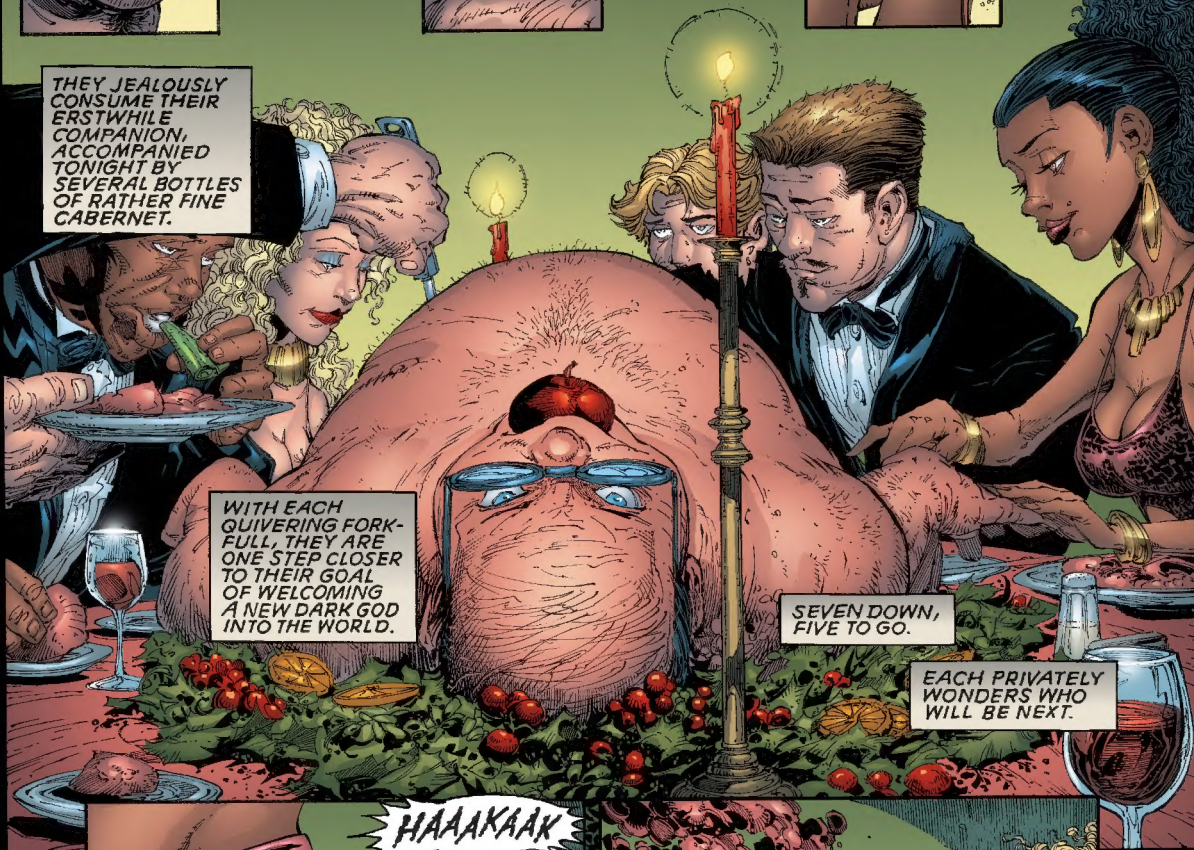
IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THE OTHERS TO FIND HIM.

REGINALD, PANICKED AND DELIRIOUS WITH BLOOD LOSS...

...HAD FALLEN INTO THE RAVINE AND BROKEN HIS FAT LITTLE NECK.

THE STORY PRETTY MUCH TOLD ITSELF.

HARGREAVES WAS RIGHT. REG WOULDN'T GET VERY FAR.



THEY JEALOUSLY CONSUME THEIR ERSTWHILE COMPANION, ACCOMPANIED TONIGHT BY SEVERAL BOTTLES OF RATHER FINE CABERNET.

WITH EACH QUIVERING FORK-FULL, THEY ARE ONE STEP CLOSER TO THEIR GOAL OF WELCOMING A NEW DARK GOD INTO THE WORLD.

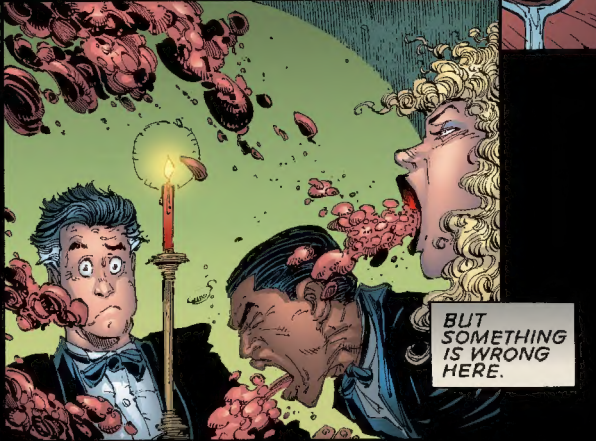
SEVEN DOWN, FIVE TO GO.

EACH PRIVATELY WONDERS WHO WILL BE NEXT.



HAAAKAAK

JILLY, GIRL, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?



BUT SOMETHING IS WRONG HERE.



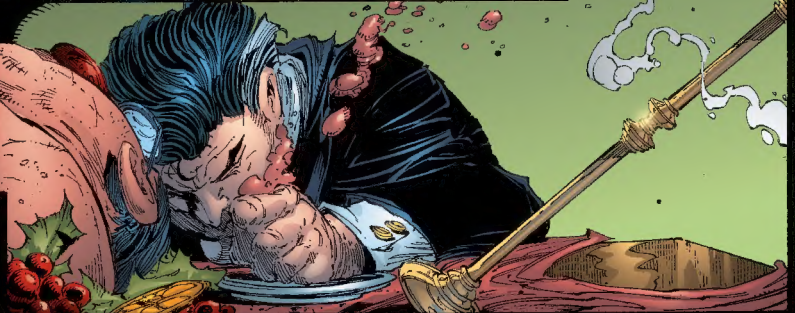
WHAT TREACHERY THIS? SOMETHING VILE MOVES THROUGH THEIR BELLIES, WRIGGLING LIKE EARTHWORMS, SKITTERING LIKE BEETLES.

IT SPREADS OUT THROUGH THEIR VEINS, TURNING THEIR BLOOD BLACK AND SLOW.



THE ROOM ERUPTS IN EXPLOSIONS OF BILE, WHITE CELLS COLLAPSE AND INTERNAL ORGANS IMplode UPON THEMSELVES.

SOON, SIX BODIES LIE TWITCHING IN THE AGONY OF THEIR DEATH THROES. SIX BODIES ENCIRCLING THE STILL, BLUE CORPSE OF A SEVENTH.



FIRE LEAPS FROM TABLE CLOTH TO THE CURTAIN, FROM CURTAIN TO OAK-TIMBERED CEILING.



IN THE END, IT IS THE FIRE THAT CONSUMES THEM ALL, THE CURLING BLACK SMOKE STINKING OF RENDERED FAT AND BURNING HAIR.



THE GAME IS ENDED, WITH NO WINNERS.



IF THE DARK GOD IS TO COME, THEY WILL NOT HAVE LIVED TO SEE IT.





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE